

President Mandela has won a great victory in what is the longest marathon of the 20th century. But now it is important that you not lose the conviction, the energy, the sheer joy of daily living which accompanied your freedom. For the challenges you face also require a marathon.

One of our country's most eloquent political leaders, Mario Cuomo, whose son now serves in my Cabinet, once said that "in democracies we campaign in poetry, but we govern in prose." It is a marathon.

I come to say that the United States admires not only the leader but the people of South Africa, and we look forward to running that marathon with you. Let us not grow weary; let us never lose heart. Let us have confidence that the people can find the way.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in a toast to the President and the people of South Africa.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 8:15 p.m. at the Vergelegen Estates. In his remarks, he referred to Deputy President Thabo Mbeki and Episcopal Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

## **The President's Radio Address**

*March 28, 1998*

Good morning. In the storefronts and shop windows of Jonesboro, Arkansas, there are signs that read, "Our hearts are with Westside Middle School." Even though Hillary and I are far away from our home State, our hearts, too, are with Westside, and with the grieving families whose loved ones were killed or injured in that tragic incident just 4 days ago.

This is the third time in recent months that a quiet town, and our Nation, have been shaken by the awful specter of students being killed by other young people at schools. We join the families of Jonesboro and all America in mourning this terrible loss of young life, life so full of promise and hope so cruelly cut short.

We mourn the loss of Natalie Brooks, of Paige Ann Herring, of Stephanie Johnson, of

Brittany Varner, and of a heroic teacher, Shannon Wright, who sacrificed her own life to save a child. These five names will be etched in our memories forever and linked forever with the names of Nicole Hadley, Jessica James, and Kayce Steger of Paducah, Kentucky, and Lydia Kay Dew and Christina Mennefee of Pearl, Mississippi. Our thoughts and our prayers are with all their families today.

We do not understand what drives children, whether in small towns or big cities, to pick up guns and take the lives of others. We may never make sense of the senseless, but we have to try. We have seen a community come together in grief and compassion for one another, and in the determination that terrible acts like these must no longer threaten our Nation's children.

Parents across America should welcome the news reported just this month by Attorney General Reno and Education Secretary Riley that the vast majority of our schools are safe and free of violent crime. We've worked hard to make our schools places of learning, not fear, places where children can worry about math and science, not guns, drugs, and gangs. But when a terrible tragedy like this occurs, it reminds us there is work yet to be done.

I have directed Attorney General Reno to bring together experts on school violence to analyze these incidents to determine what they have in common and whether there are further steps we can take to reduce the likelihood of something so terrible recurring.

Already we've seen the remarkable difference community policing has made in our Nation's streets. Now we have to apply that same energy and resolve to our schools to make them safer places for children to learn, play, and grow. At school there must be full compliance with our policy of zero tolerance toward guns, and at home there should be no easy access to weapons that kill.

Protecting our children from school violence is more than a matter of law or policy; at heart, it is a matter of basic values, of conscience and community. We must teach our children to respect others. We must instill in them a deep, abiding sense of right and wrong. And to children who are troubled,

angry, or alone, we must extend a hand before they destroy the lives of others and destroy their own in the process.

We have to understand that young children may not fully appreciate the consequences of actions that are destructive but may be able to be romanticized at a twisted moment. And we have to make sure that they don't fall into that trap.

Three towns: Jonesboro, Pearl, Paducah—too many precious lives lost. The white ribbons that flutter today in my home State of Arkansas are a poignant and powerful challenge to all of us, a challenge to come together for the sake of our children and for the future of our Nation.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:52 p.m. on March 27 at the Cape Grace Hotel in Cape Town, South Africa, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 28.

### **Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on the Future of South Africa in Johannesburg March 28, 1998**

**The President.** Let me first just thank all of you for taking the time to come and meet with Hillary and me. We've had a fascinating trip to Africa and a wonderful 3 days in South Africa, but I didn't want to leave the country without having the chance to have kind of an informal conversation with young people that are making the future of this country. And I want you to say to us whatever you'd like to say, but I'm especially interested in what you see are the main challenges today, what you think the United States and others could do to be helpful.

The story of the liberation of South Africa is a fabulous story. As I said last night in my toast to Mr. Mandela, one of our most eloquent political leaders in America said that in democracies, campaigns are conducted in poetry, but government is conducted in prose. And there is always a lot of hard work that has to be done. And I think it's very important that your generation maintain its optimism and energy, and it's important that the rest of us continue to make a constructive contribution to your efforts.

So I basically just want to listen today and hear what you have to say. And if you have any questions for us, I'll be glad to answer them, but I want to learn more about your take on your country and your future.

Hillary, do you want to say anything?

**Hillary Clinton.** No, I would be happy just to start.

[At this point, Friendly Twala, a Ministry of Education district education coordinator specializing in guidance and career orientation, described his background and experience in mediation and conflict resolution. Graeme Simpson, director, Center for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, described his work and suggested that violent crime was perhaps the greatest threat to democracy and human rights in South Africa.]

**Mrs. Clinton.** Why don't we go around and hear from everybody briefly first, and then perhaps have a conversation about some of those issues?

[Bongi Mkhabela, Director of Projects and Programs in the office of Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, stressed the need for integration of youth issues into national policy and for training of the next generation of leaders. Vasu Gounden, director, African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, suggested sustainable aid and the African Crisis Response Initiative as discussion topics and praised the Entebbe Summit communique positions on democracy and civil society. Bongani Linda, arts manager, Center for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, described his work with prisoners and youth and suggested that cultural exchanges could have a positive impact on youth in communities such as Soweto. Kumi Naidoo, executive director, South African National NGO Coalition (SANGOCO), urged that the U.S. Agency for International Development remain involved in South Africa beyond the transitional period ending in 2002 and provide increased assistance to the nongovernmental sector. Nicola Galombik, director of educational television, South African Broadcasting Corporation, emphasized the importance of information and technology to bridge the cultural and interpersonal divisions of apartheid by carrying the messages and faces